Navy, Negroes in -1937

# F.D. to Probe Dismissal

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**"I am convinced that the academy has done the young man a grave injustice. I think there should be a Congressional investigation of the conduct of the officers of the academy and all others in the treatment of Johnson. To say the least, I am disappointed in you."**

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It was reported that his conduct mark suffered during the last weeks of the present term when he was late for formation seven times. Midshipmen are given demerits for each violation of academy regulations.

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In the fourth class, corresponding to the freshman class in a civilian college, to which Johnson belonged, 87 midshipmen failed to make the grade. One midshipman, who would have graduated in June, failed to measure up to the requirements. Five in the second class were deficient and 49 in the third class, making a total of 141.

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Representative Maury Maverick liberal Democrat, of Texas, stated that "if there has been any racial injustice at all, there ought to be an investigation."

**Mr. Maverick, a member of the House Military Affairs Committee, who has long been active in the struggle for civil liberties, said he had received reports that midshipmen were being given physical and scholastic examinations by the academy officials without sufficient notice, probably in an attempt to reduce the present enrollment.**

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# Johnson's Record at Case School and at the Academy

(By ANP)

Johnson's record at the Case School of Applied Science, Cleveland, Ohio, was so excellent that Naval Academy authorities admitted him without an examination. His record at the Case School follows:

**CASE SCHOOL OF APPLIED SCIENCE**
**Office of the Dean.**

November 11, 1933.

Report of JAMES L. JOHNSON, Jr.,
For the period September 21 to November 4.

FRESHMAN YEAR

| | 1st Term | 2nd Term |
|---|---|---|
| Algebra | C | |
| Analytic Geometry | | C |
| English | B* | B* |
| History | C* | B* |
| Chemistry | B | B* |
| Engineering Draw | B | B |
| Gymnasium | Passed | Passed |

SOPHOMORE YEAR

| | 1st Term | 2nd Term |
|---|---|---|
| Calculus | C | D |
| Physics | B | C |
| Physics Laboratory | B | B |
| Types of Literature | A* | |
| Applied Mechanics | | C* |
| Technical Exposition | | C* |
| Metal. and Metallog. | B | |
| Elem of Mech. Eng. | B | |
| Drawing | B | |
| Shop | C | C |
| Mechanism | | B |
| Gymnasium | Passed | Passed |

JUNIOR YEAR

For the term ending February 1, 1936

| | |
|---|---|
| Strength of Materials | C |
| Economics | C |
| Thermodynamics | C |
| Calculus III | C |
| M.E. Laboratory | B |
| M.E. Problems | A* |
| Materials Lab. | C |
| Public Speaking | A* |
| Gymnasium | Passed |

RECORD AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY

Fourth class, United States Academy, Annapolis, Maryland: Relative standing and marks for academic months of October and November, ending November 21, 1936.

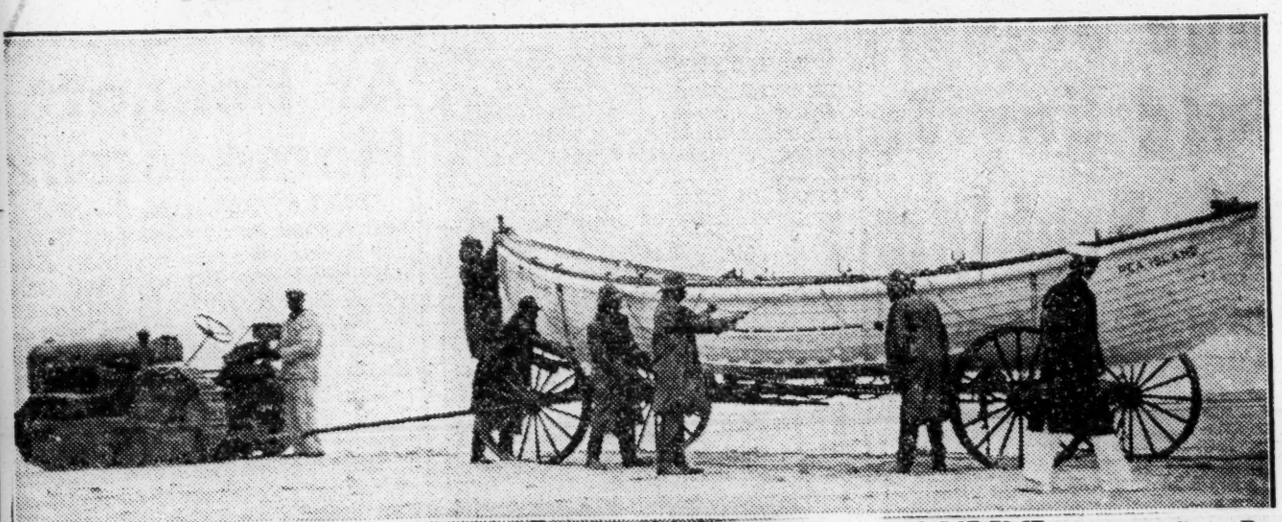
MIDSHIPMAN J. L. JOHNSON, Jr., Total membership of class, 734.

October, Mathematics, 3.12; Language, 3.05. November, Marine Engineering, 3.56; Mathematics, 2.94; Elec. Engineering, 2.99; Eng. and History, 2.28; Language, 3.00; Rel. Standing, Marine Engineering, 64; Mathematics, 284; Elec. Engineering, 353; Language, 504. The mark of 2.28 in Eng. and History was made up before Christmas holidays so that student had full vacation.

Demerits to November, 121. Ratings: 4.00 to 3.40, DISTINCTION; 3.39 to 3.00, WITH CREDIT, 2.99 to 2.50, FAIR. 2.49 and less, UNSATISFACTORY.

November 30, 1936, Special Order No. 40-36: "Christmas leave for midshipmen will be granted as follows: a: To all midshipmen who are satisfactory in studies, and not restricted, from immediately after noon meal formation, Wednesday, December 23, 1936, until 1:00 Sunday, January 3, 1937.

# PEA ISLAND STATION WILL REMAIN ACTIVE



Although 13 stations in the Norfolk and New York districts of the U. S. Coast Guard will be decommissioned in a six-months modernization program, famous Pea Island (N. C.) Coast Guard Station is not among them. The station, manned by Negroes for over fifty years, has one of the best records in its district. The only all-colored unit in the entire Coast Guard, it was the subject of an exclusive illustrated feature article in the Journal and Guide last summer. The above photograph was made as members of the station crew, were about to launch a surf boat. (Journal and Guide Photo).

# NAMES TWO MORE TO GO TO ANNAPOLIS

## Congressman To Demand Congressional Probe Of Johnson Dismissal

WASHINGTON—Representative Mitchell (Dem.), Illinois, announced Wednesday the designation of two Washington (D. C.) Race youths as principal candidates for admission to the Annapolis Naval Academy on July 1. They are George Trivers, 19 years old, a senior Miner Teachers' College and James Minor Jr., 18, a junior at Howard University.

Mitchell has announced he will demand a Congressional investigation of circumstances leading to the dismissal, Feb. 11, of his last appointee, Midshipman James Lee Johnson Jr., also of Washington.

Johnson was the first Race youth admitted to the Academy since 1874.

Chesterfield, S. C. Advertiser
March 11, 1937

## SOUTH CAROLINA NEGROES APPOINTED TO ANNAPOLIS

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Records of the Navy Department show no negro has ever graduated from the Naval Academy. Only three others have been appointed and two of these were appointed from South Carolina during Reconstruction Days. On September 21, 1872 James H. Conyers was appointed to the Academy by Congressman R. B. Elliott of the Third South Carolina District. Conyers resigned on November 11, 1873 because of deficiency in his studies. On September 25, 1873, Alonzo C. McClennan was appointed to the Academy by Congressman-at-large R. H. Cain. McClennan resigned on January 7, 1874, "on account of being badly deficient in studies."

Congressman R. B. Elliott was a Negro Republican and served from 1871-1874 at which time he resigned. Congressman R. H. Cain was also a Negro Republican who served from 1873-1879 but did not offer for reelection.

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| Technical Exposition | | C* |
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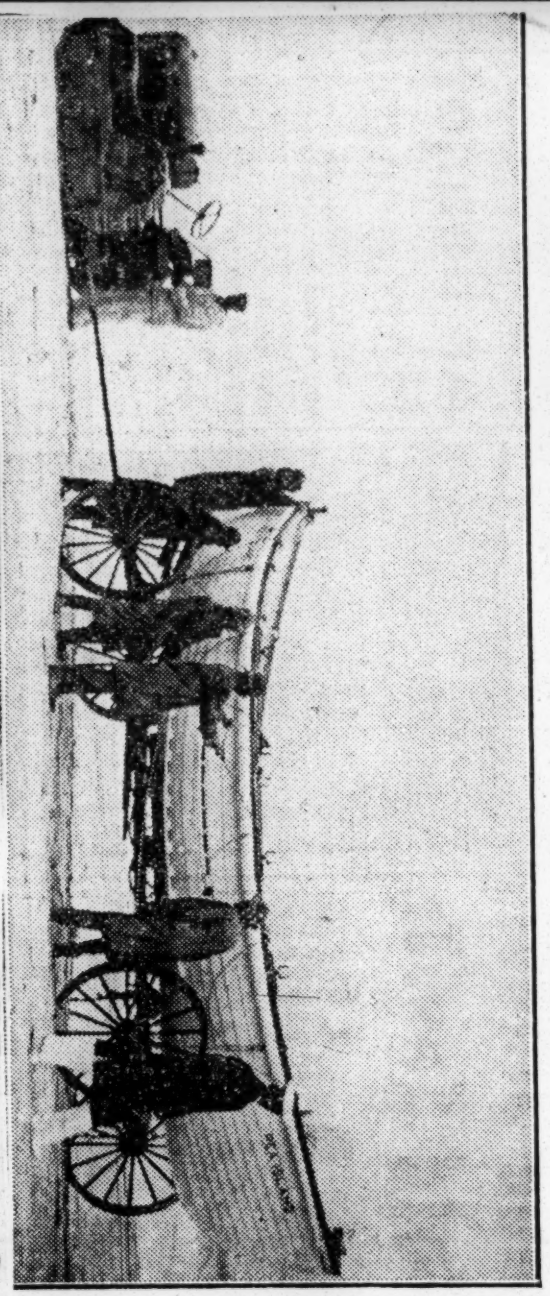

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Navy, Negroes in- 1937

# Mitchell Visited by Midshipman

1-9-37

WASHINGTON

Midshipman James Lee Johnson, Jr., in company with his father, visited Representative Arthur W. Mitchell, at the latter's R Street home, Christmas Day. Mitchell appointed Johnson to Annapolis.

Representative Mitchell told the AFRO this week that he expects to appoint another boy to Annapolis. Of his first appointee, he said:

**Wants Him Let Alone**

"He is doing well down there at Annapolis. It is my hope that he will be allowed to stay, without being molested by outside interests, as has been the case in the past."

Recently the AFRO-AMERICAN sought to photograph Johnson at the Academy, but officials there declined permission.

Reprinted from Late Editions of last week

## NEGRO ASKED TO QUIT U. S. NAVAL ACADEMY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12.—(AP)—The Washington Post will say tomorrow that the first negro student to be admitted to the Annapolis naval academy since 1874 has been asked to resign after having failed in mid-year examinations.

He is James Lee Johnson, Jr., of this city. He was appointed to the academy last summer by Representative Mitchell, Democrat, Illinois, a negro.

## ANNAPOLIS CONFIRMS RESIGNATIO F NEGRO

ANNAPOLIS, Md., 13.—(AP)—Resignation of James L. Johnson Jr., of Washington, D. C., first negro to enter the naval academy in 62 years, was confirmed today by the secretary of the navy.

Johnson's conduct mark suffered in recent weeks when he was late for formation seven times. He also failed to make satisfactory grades in English and history and failed to pass the mid-year eye tests.

# MITCHELL IN FURY OVER OUSTING

daily world

2-17-37

## Charges Johnson Was "Railroaded" From Naval Academy

## FLAYS ADMIRAL

2-17-37

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(SNS)—Unconvinced that deliberate tactics were not used to get Midshipman James Lee Johnson, Jr., colored cadet from this city, out of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell, of Chicago, who appointed the boy, was vehement in his remarks to the press late Saturday when he said he believed the youth had been "railroaded" from the institution. Mitchell further threatened a Congressional investigation and claimed that Rear Admiral David F. Sellers, superintendent of the Naval Academy had not kept his promise regarding the boy.

**Claim Failures in Courses**

According to officials at Annapolis, Johnson had his resignation from the Academy accepted by Secretary Swanson following receipt of a report from the academic board which showed him delinquent in the English and history courses and in the eyesight examination. His record reportedly contained an overplus of demerits.

**"Didn't Keep Word"**

Even when the method of accepting Johnson's resignation along with those of 140 other midshipmen was described by Lieutenant Commander Theodore T. Paterson, aide to Admiral Sellers, and Congressman Mitchell was assured the boy was given a fair chance, the lone colored Representative in the House, said, "Sellers didn't keep his word".

**Disappointed In Admiral**

According to Mitchell, Admiral Sellers had told him at the first of the month that Johnson was in no immediate danger and that, before any step was taken regarding him, he (Mitchell) would be given notification. Saturday, February 13, at noon, Mitchell, in a telegram received by Admiral Sellers, protested the resignation and added, "To say the least, I'm disappointed in you". Later, he told the Washington POST, a local daily, that Johnson's "dismissal" was contrary to what he expected after talking with Sellers here, and to Captain Forde A. Todd and Lieutenant Commander Lemuel P. Padgett, Jr., at the academy.

**Charges Injustice**

In a letter addressed to Admiral Sellers after he had learned most of the details in connection with the cadet's ousting, Congressman Mitchell said, in part, "I am convinced that the Academy has done the young man a grave injustice. I think there should be a Congressional investigation of the conduct of the officers of the Academy and all others in the treatment of Johnson."

Daily

Contacted by a newspaper representative late Saturday night, Admiral Sellers was asked what reply he wished to make regarding the matter said he had no comment at all to make.

**Mitchell Praised**

Prior to the Johnson "dismissal", Representative Maury Maverick, of Texas, a member of the House Military Affairs Committee and a long-standing protagonist of civil liberties, said he had received reports that midshipmen were being given physical and scholastic examinations by the academy officials without sufficient warning, probably in an attempt to reduce the present size of the enrollment at the institution which is, this year, 2,282, the largest in its history.

In his remarks, Maverick spoke well of Congressman Mitchell and said the colored politician's charges, without a doubt, are well founded. He said he had found Mitchell to be "an unbiased fellow, conservative, and very careful".

## URGES PROBE

**CONG. A. W. MITCHELL —of Chicago, who is attempting to create sentiment for a Congressional investigation at the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis following the ousting of 22-year-old James Lee Johnson of Washington, D. C., one of his appointees.**

## *Negro Midshipman Fails in Studies*

ANNAPOLIS, Md., Fe 13 (AP) — Resignation of James Lee Johnson, Jr., of Washington, D. C., first Negro to enter the Naval Academy in 62 years, was confirmed today by the secretary of the navy.

Johnson, with 134 other middies, was found deficient in classwork during the first half of the school term which began last fall.

Johnson was appointed to the academy by Rep. Arthur W. Mitchell, Democrat of Chicago, Ill. He reported last summer.

Johnson's conduct mark suffered in recent weeks when he was late for formation seven times. He also failed to make satisfactory grades in English and history and failed to pass the mid-year eye tests.

## Negro Dismissed From Annapolis

Education

### Poor Grades, Defective Eyesight Reasons

2-12-37

ANNAPOLIS, MD., Feb. 14.—(AP)—The Naval Academy's former negro midshipman, James Lee Johnson, Jr., remained silent today on his resignation because of deficiencies in studies and unsatisfactory eyesight.

Capt. Forde A. Todd, U. S. N., commandant of midshipmen, quoted Johnson as requesting "that he not be interviewed by newspapermen." The negro ex-middie prepared to leave tomorrow for his home in Washington, D. C.

Rear Admiral David Foote Sellers, superintendent of the Academy, declined to comment on a telegram of Representative Arthur D. Mitchell, negro Democrat from Illinois, protesting the resignation and suggesting an investigation.

Representative Mitchell, who had appointed Johnson to the Academy last Summer, wired Admiral Sellers that after a conversation he "was practically assured that no such steps as you have taken would be taken because Johnson was showing improvement both in scholarship and deportment."

"I am convinced that the Academy has done the young man a grave injustice," Mitchell added. "I think there should be a congressional investigation of the conduct of the officers of the Academy and all others in the treatment of Johnson."

Johnson was one of 135 midshipmen whose resignations were accepted yesterday by Secretary of Navy Claude A. Swanson. The negro had been listed as making unsatisfactory grades in English and history and failing the mid-year eye tests. His conduct mark also was given as not being satisfactory.

# NEGRO MIDSHIPMAN CONTESTS OUSTER

## Roosevelt Orders Inquiry Into Forced Resignation From Naval Academy

## SPONSOR FILES AN APPEAL

2-17-37

### Representative Mitchell Charges 'Skullduggery' After a Call on the President

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16.—President Roosevelt has ordered an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the forced resignation from the Naval Academy Saturday of James L. Johnson Jr. of Washington, the only Negro to enter the academy in sixty-two years.

Representative Arthur W. Mitchell of Illinois, the only Negro in Congress, who appointed the boy, called today to discuss the case with the President. Mr. Mitchell said that Johnson clearly had been "railroaded" out of the academy.

The boy's resignation was requested along with those of 134 other midshipmen who were ad-

judged deficient in studies or conduct. He was a member of the first-year class.

Representative Mitchell said that the academy authorities had told him that the boy was deficient in deportment and that of late his marks in history and English, which form a combined course, had not been satisfactory. At the academy it was said that he had received demerits for being late at formation seven times in the last few weeks of the present term.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the boy is being railroaded out," Representative Mitchell said.

"I have evidence of skullduggery here," he continued, pointing to a brief case which he had taken in to the President.

Representative Mitchell said that he had discussed the case with Admiral Sellers, Superintendent of the academy. He added that the naval officers had no idea that "I would open this thing up." He asserted that an investigation made here and at Annapolis showed that the authorities had first said the boy's deportment was bad, next that his English and history marks were poor, and finally, that he had poor eyesight.

Mr. Mitchell, although acknowledging that he did not know what the outcome would be, said that the boy was still at the academy and did not leave yesterday with most of the others who resigned.

Only four Negroes have ever been admitted to Annapolis and none has ever been graduated.

# "RAILROADED," JOHNSON SAYS

CLEVELAND, Ohio—James Lee Johnson issued the following statement here Tuesday at the Case School, which he has just re-entered, after leaving the Naval Academy:

"According to the commandant, the academic board based its decision on the fact that I was behind in two subjects, English and conduct.

"There is no course in the marking of which personal opinion, prejudice, and interpretation play such a dominant part as in English, as taught at the Naval Academy.

**"Midshipmen of all classes have frequently remarked about this fact. Some, among whom there was at least one first classman, have freely admitted that they believed discrimination was involved in my failure.**

**"It is significant that in no other academic subject did I receive a grade below 3.00. The weighted average of my marks as can be seen by the table below, is 2.916—well above 2.50, the passing grade."**

## How Johnson Stood

| SUBJECT | GRADE | WEIGHT | PRODUCT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spanish | 3.09 | 1.5 | 4.64 |
| Marine Engineering | 3.47 | 1.5 | 5.20 |
| Mathematics | 3.00 | 5.0 | 15.00 |
| Chemistry | 3.10 | 1.5 | 4.65 |
| English | 2.41 | 1.5 | 3.617 |
| Conduct | 2.21 | 1.5 | 3.315 |
| Total | | 12.5 | 36.422 |

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Below is given the final record made by Johnson, on which officials based their action in asking his resignation. The word "weight" as used here means value by which each grade is multiplied.**

**By dividing 12.5 into 36.422, one gets the weighted average of 2.916 mentioned by Johnson above.**

Continuing, Johnson said:

**"Mathematics, our most important subject, as can be seen above, has a weight of 5, while the others have a weight of 1.5.**

**2 Get New Exams**

**"Another indication of discrimination is that at least two who said they were deficient in more than one academic subject were given re-examinations. Yet, I, who had been found only slightly deficient in one academic subject and conduct, was not given this opportunity.**

**"It seems that their use of my conduct mark as a criterion is based on the premise that in having more demerits than my classmates I had necessarily violated the naval academy regulations more than they . . .**

**"I didn't resign out of my own free will, but because I was ordered to do so. Lieutenant Christie on distriboting the resignation blanks had said that they MUST be signed IMMEDIATELY.**

**Couldn't Refuse**

**"On my request for time in which to consider the matter and communicate with my Congressman, he referred me to my battalion officer, who made me to understand that the commandant would consider my refusal a breach of discipline.**

**"I most certainly would not have signed it had I been allowed time for a clear consideration of the situation. I believe that this insistence on haste in the tendering of resignations was the culmination of a planned attempt to oust me from the academy, for which the Naval Academy Executive Department was largely responsible.**

**"In their dissemblance, they long made me believe that they were interested in my welfare. I now see that their air of friendliness was merely an affectation.**

**Slip Recalled**

**"Significant, indeed, is the slip of the tongue that the Officer of the Watch made when I spoke with him on February 15. I asked him why there was such a hurry to have the resignation signed.**

**"In swer to this, his first words were 'The Department had planned——'; then, flushing, as he apparently realized that he was releasing incriminating information, he corrected himself by saying that it was done to save the United States Government money.**

**"In view of all that has happened, I am forced to just one conclusion:**

**"I was railroaded out of the United States Naval Academy."**

**(Signed)**

**JAMES LEE JOHNSON, Jr.**

Charlotte, N. C. Observer
February 25, 1937

# DISMISSAL OF NEGRO MIDSHIPMAN UPHELD

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24.—(AP) — Secretary Swanson said today that a sentence of dismissal imposed recently upon a negro midshipman, James Lee Johnson, Jr., for deficiency in studies at Annapolis naval academy had been upheld by an investigating board.

Johnson, only negro in the regiment of midshipmen, was one of 135 dropped from the academy at midterm because of failure to maintain stipulated minimum grades.

Camden, S. C., Messenger
March 3, 1937

**South Carolina Negroes Appointed to Annapolis During Reconstruction Period**

The resignations of 135 Naval Academy midshipmen, including James Lee Johnson, Jr., the only negro at the Academy, were approved last Saturday by the Secretary of the Navy. Johnson, the first negro to enter the Academy since 1874, was appointed by Congressman Arthur Mitchell, negro Democrat from Illinois. He was asked to resign on three counts, deportment, deficient eyesight, and failure in English.

Records of the Navy Depatrment show no negro has ever graduated from the Naval Academy. Only three others have been appointed and two of these were appointed from South Carolina during Reconstruction Days. In September 21, 1872, James Conyers was appointed to the Academy by Congressman R. B. Elliott of the Third South Carolina District. Conyers resigned on November 11, 1873 because of deficiency in his studies. On September 25, 1873, Alonzo C. McClennan was appointed to the Academy by Congressman-at-large R H Cain. McClennan resigned on January 7, 1874, "on account of being badly deficient in studies".

Congressman R. B. Elliott was a Negro Republican and served from 1871 - 1874 at which time he resigned. Congressman R. H Cain was also a Negro Republican who served from 1873 - -1879 but did not offer for re-election.

# ANNAPOLIS REVEALS RESIGNATION OF 135

## Failure in Studies During the First Semester Is Cause of Their Departure

## NUMBER 'ABOUT AVERAGE'

## Midshipmen Will Resume Their Civilian Status at Once—Negro Is Among Those Leaving

2-14-37

ANNAPOLIS, Feb. 13 (AP).—Resignations of 135 midshipmen, found deficient in studies at the Naval Academy, was announced by the authorities today.

Among those resigning was James Lee Johnson Jr. of Washington, the first Negro to enter the academy in sixty-two years.

Immediately upon news that Secretary Swanson had confirmed the resignations, the midshipmen reverted to civilian status. They will begin their departures from the academy Monday.

The academic board considered about 300 cases this week. Resignations were requested from one first classman, five second classmen, forty-four third classmen and eighty-five plebes.

The resignations were described by academy officials as the average "casualty" list among the 2,282 middies enrolled.

Academic failures on which the resignations were based occurred in the first half of the school term, which began last Fall. They were taken to the Navy Department yesterday by Rear Admiral David oFote Sellers, superintendent of the Academy.

Johnson was appointed to the Academy by Representative Arthur W. Mitchell, Democrat, of Chicago. He reported last Summer, passed his physical entrance test and was enrolled as a member of the plebe class.

It was learned today that his conduct mark suffered during the last weeks of the present term when he was late for formation seven times. Midshipmen receive demerits for violations of academy regulations, the demerits affecting the conduct mark.

Navy, Negroes in—1937

# SAYS WHITE GOBS WON'T OBEY NEGRO

Amsterdam News

## Letter May Explain Johnson's Ouster From Academy

5-8-37

LOS ANGELES, May 5 (ANP).—John H. Owens, a well-known resident here, recently wrote a letter to the United States Navy Department requesting higher rating and promotions for Negroes in the United States Navy and the reply to his request, sent from the Washington office of the Bureau of Navigation, gives a remarkable insight into Navy conditions, purporting to explain just why Negroes who enlist are not made officers.

The Bureau of Navigation admits that the experiment of having Negro naval officers over white enlisted men has never been tried, but protested that it would be a failure on the face of it; for that reason Negroes are not permitted to enlist in the navy other than in the messman branch—the food service department of the ship. The Negro messmen are charged with the duty of preparing the tables of the enlisted men's mess or dining room and serving the food prepared in the ship's galley. Their work is similar to that of waiters in hotels and better class cafes.

**Tried Filipinos.**

The bureau claims that at one time Filipinos were given charge of two ships "under white officers" and that "this experiment proved a failure." Later, according to the letter, the same experiment was tried with tugboats in the Samoan Islands and "this experiment likewise proved a failure."

The bureau's explanation is doubly interesting because in some quarters here it is viewed as shedding light on the recent ouster from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., of Midshipmen James Lee Johnson, appointee of Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell. Dismissed for "deficiency in his studies," it was pointed out here that if Midshipman Johnson had graduated from Annapolis, he would have been made an officer and placed in command over white sailors.

**Unwilling to Experiment.**

The signature of the bureau official writing the letter to Mr. Owens was undecipherable, but, drawing a comparison between the Filipinos and Negroes, this statement was made:

"There is no reason to believe that such an experiment with men of the colored race would produce any different results. Experience of many years in the Navy has shown clearly that men of the colored race, if enlisted in any other than the messman branch, and promoted to the position of petty officer, cannot maintain discipline."

The writer, however, does not give the basis for this statement or state where, when, or how, experiments with Negro officers were conducted.

The bureau letter also explained that men who enlist in the navy are not assigned to any particular ship but required to serve wherever needed and that for this reason no provision can be made for any particular ship to be manned entirely by Negro sailors. The communication has caused wide-spread comment here and in other coast cities because of the proximity of the naval base at San Diego and because many young Negroes do not adopt the navy as a career, knowing of the many restrictions that would be imposed against them.

# Only Unit Manned By Our Group

Journal & Guide

Norfolk, Va.

6-12-37

## Will Be First White Officer In Charge In 58 Years

## PROTESTS MADE

**Special to Journal and Guide**

WASHINGTON, D. C.—For the first time in 58 years the Pea Island Coast Guard Station off the North Carolina coast, the only such station manned and officered by Negroes in the entire country, will have a white officer-in-in-charge beginning Thursday, June 10—under orders issued from Coast Guard headquarters here.

A widespread effort to prevent the action and the expected elimination of the colored crew entirely was launched by the Journal and Guide as soon as news of the action became known a few days ago.

Investigation of the action is ably done more in the past few years than any other governmental agency to maintain decent wage-and-hour standards for white and colored agricultural and unskilled laborers, by offering them work at fair subsistence wages

Another danger in the Lanham amendment is pointed out. A private employer might insist that a WPA worker, receiving a subsistence wage of $45 a month for 120 hours' work — approximately 37 cents an hour—be discharged to take private employment at $50 a month although the private job calls for 12 hours wak a day, six days a week—a total of 228 hours per month at a wage of less than 18 cents per hour — with possibly the imaginable living conditions thrown in for good measure.

## Negro Passes Tests To Enter Annapolis

ANNAPOLIS, MD., June 16.—(AP)—George J. Trivers, negro, successfully passed the physical tests for admission to the Naval Academy and will be sworn in as a midshipman, it was learned today. He had previously met the mental requirements.

Trivers, an appointee of Representative Arthur Mitchell, negro, (D., Illinois, is the second negro accepted as a midshipman in more than 50 years. None have ever graduated. James Lee Johnson, Jr., negro, Washington, became a midshipman last Summer, but resigned in February because of academic failures.

Age 6-26-37

New York Age

## WE WISH HIM LUCK

COMES WORD FROM Annapolis, Md., that George J. Trivers, a Negro youth, has successfully passed the mental and physical tests incidental to admission to the United State Naval Academy and will be sworn in as a midshipman.

Trivers, an appointee of Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell, will be the second Negro midshipman at the Academy in the last fifty years. He enters with about two and three-quarter strikes on him for no Negro has ever been graduated from this government institution where prejudice is rampant and from which only the earlier part of this year, another Negro youth was dismissed for alleged minor infractions of the rules.

The New York Age and all other Negro newspapers wish Trivers nothing but success in his new venture. He knowingly enters the institution where he will be subjected to all sorts of indignities and injustices not only by the students but by the faculty members. He will have to exercise great control at all times knowing that just one minor slip will be sufficient for those in authority to oust him. Of his capabilities to keep abreast of his fellow students, we have no doubt. If he has the intestinal fortitude to stick it out, remains to be seen.

We do not believe that we have struck too pessimistic a note in wishing young Trivers success for he must know full well what he is entering. Fortified by the knowledge that he won't be given a break unless "hell should freeze over", we believe that this young man can make the grade if he but strives to keep ahead of his classmates both in his studies and in his deportment.

The eyes of the Negro race will be centered on Annapolis from now on following the career of Trivers. He is a trail blazer, has a hard road to travel but he is doing it for his race. We wish him good luck and Godspeed as he embarks on his new venture.

## THE COAST GUARD PROTEST

Individuals and organizations are protesting to Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau against the assignment of a white officer to take charge of the Pea Island Coast Guard Station at Manteo, N. C., which has been manned by an efficient all-colored unit for 58 years.

This case reveals the big flaw in Negro tactics and also the inherent danger in segregated units. We never protest until the axe has fallen.

Mr. Morgenthau says the appointment of a white officer is only temporary and that a competent colored officer will be appointed as soon as one can be found.

But where is one to be found? Negroes have never been sufficiently interested in the Coast Guard which their taxes support, to find out what role colored men play in it, what positions they hold or what are their chances of advancement. They have been almost as indifferent to the Coast Guard as they have to the Army and Navy.

Thus the demand for a colored fighter to head the station could be pressed with much more force if we knew there were other colored officers in the Coast Guard service. Evidently there are not, for the purpose of the segregation in the first place, as everywhere, was to insure that there would not be any.

Experience has amply demonstrated that we make little headway with these sporadic protests. They are like locking the barn door after the horse is stolen.

Our fight for a square deal must be intelligent, consistent, persistent and unvarying. It should not be a hit-or-miss attack.

**Without facts, without money and without enthusiasm and sincerity our struggle for a full manhood status is doomed.**

The N. A. A. C. P. might make a GOOD START toward a real campaign against color discrimination and segregation by PUBLISHING the facts about these forms of injustice throughout the United States.

This is our fight and it is our job to roll up our sleeves and tackle it in an efficient manner.

Occasional wails serve no purpose except to reveal our impotence.

# Mitchell To Probe Boy's Resignation

### Subtle Influence to Bar Negroes Thought Cause of Youth Leaving

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The resignation of George J. Trivers, Jr., from the Naval Academy here last Tuesday was brought about by insults and studied punishment that were beyond human endurance, it was learned by the Tribune.**

Reports that Trivers resigned after he allegedly admitted that he was unfit for naval service, were stoutly denied by the youth. He quit because it was impossible for him to remain and take the insults heaped on him without fighting back, and this was what naval academy officials wanted him to do, it was said.

It is known that the Washington youth was called vile names and many times he was forced to take insults from Southern white boys and not be permitted to retaliate. Several times in line with white youths they would step on his feet and laugh. During group formations he found himself alone, and at other gatherings he was shunned and avoided and made to feel miserable, it was said.

Officers condoned these insults, although they must have been in position to see and hear them, it was reported.

Trivers was visited by his mother Sunday at the academy. When she heard and saw the indignities heaped on her son she persuaded him to resign. Trivers has been ill for several days, has lost weight as well as his appetite. He has suffered in silence as none at the academy would sympathize with him, it is known.

He is expected in Washington this week-end and plans to begin studying for his master's degree.

The parents of the youth would give no explanation for their son's sudden resignation and refused to talk to the Tribune. Mitchell immediately went to the Academy Wednesday where he talked with Captain F. A. Todd, acting superintendent, who said Trivers resigned of his own accord and reported the boy as saying he was not fit for naval service.

Mitchell said he received word of Trivers' resignation Tuesday and made an appointment with Captain Todd. Mtichell said that another of his appointees, James Lee Johnson, Jr., who had been dropped last spring, had been held deficient as to eyesight, English and deportment, "all of which is a lie."

"I want to get the facts in this case because another Negro whom I appointed to the academy was railroaded out of it," Mitchell said.

When Trivers left the academy he was enthused over the prospects of becoming a midshipman and in his talk with a reporter for the Tribune, he said he was fully aware of the difficulties he would encounter and was willing to go through with it. He also said he knew of the attempt to keep Negroes out of the naval service school.

His resignation came as a surprise to his mother who lives on Elvans Road, Northeast, and the other members of the family. All said they were completely in the dark about the matter. He was still at the academy yesterday (Wednesday).

James Lee Johnson, the first colored youth to enter the academy in over a half century, was dismissed last spring after he had been there for nearly a year. The report that he was deficient in English, eyesight and deportment was scoffed at by his parents and Mitchell. The representative called at the White House and on leaving said he had a brief-case full of proof that Johnson was railroaded. He said later that he would demand a congressional investigation which never took place.

GEORGE J. TRIVERS

Trivers as well as Johnson, had excellent scholastic records and neither had to take the mental test. Trivers was a senior at Miner Teachers' College, while Johnson was a student at the Case School of Applied Science in Ohio. where he has returned to resume his studies after leaving Annapolis.

Both boys were excellent students and fine representatives of young American manhood. Trivers at one time was a Tribune newsboy and later became an agent in Anacostia.

Mitchell refused to discuss the case with the colored press and instructed the parents of Trivers as well as Johnson's not to talk to newsmen.

On leaving the academy last spring, Johnson gave out a statement in which he said every subtle influence is used at the academy to make life miserable for a Negro midshipman. He said he felt this influence the first day he was at the school. All sorts of tricks were used to bring him demerits and make his life miserable. He stated that such action was winked at by the officers and actually encouraged.

Johnson said that on the second [illegible] at the academy a second classman threatened that every means would be used by midshipmen from the south to make his life at the academy short and unpleasant. He said he was frequently told that he would have small chance for staying at the academy for any length of time.

Navy, Negroes in - 1937

# Mitchell Drops Academy Probe

Journal and Guide 7-17-37

## Says Appointee Was Unsuited For Work; Mother Intervened Official States

WASHINGTON, D. C.—There was no "unpleasantness" in the resignation of George J. Trivers from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell of Illinois was informed last week by Captain Forde A. Todd, acting superintendent of the Academy.

The Congressman conferred with Captain Todd at Annapolis soon after he learned of Trivers' resignation. The superintendent was quoted by Mr. Mitchell as saying previously that, "Trivers had offered no complaint at the time of his resignation but had admitted he was unfit for naval service."

An official of the Navy Department has since stated that the resignation of Trivers, accepted by Secretary Claude A. Swanson, was accompanied by a letter from the youth's mother saying she needed him at home, and urging him to resign.

Congressman Mitchell is quoted as having said that Trivers resigned from the Naval Academy because he found he could not do a midshipman's work.

The appointment of Trivers to the Academy was made by Mr. Mitchell several weeks ago, and he successfully passed the physical examination. He was a June graduate of Miner College, and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George J. Trivers of 2817½ Elvans Road, S. E., Washington, D. C.

A third appointee, James I. Minor, failed to pass the mental test.

Last August, Congressman Mitchell appointed James Lee Johnson, Jr., of Washington, D. C., to the Naval Academy. He resigned in February, 1937, when an academic board at the Academy reported he was deficient in English and history, had failed in the eyesight examination, and had more than the allowed number of demerits.

Mr. Mitchell pressed an inquiry into Johnson's resignation, demanded and got a Presidential investigation, but the resignation stood. Johnson was the first Negro admitted to the Academy since 1874.

### OTHER APPOINTEES

Another appointee of Mr. Mitchell to the Academy last year, James D. Fowler, Howard graduate, was found to be three months over the age limit for midshipmen at the time. Mr. Mitchell subsequently appointed Fowler to the West Point Military Academy where he qualified for admission last week.

According to Navy Department records only three Negro youths have been admitted to the Naval Academy prior to Johnson's stay—James H. Conyers, Alonzo McClennan, and Henry Edwin Baker, Jr.

Conyers was appointed from South Carolina on September 21, 1872, resigned November 11, 1873, on account of deficiency in studies.

McClennan was appointed from South Carolina on September 25, 1873, resigning January 7, 1874, on account of deficiency in studies.

Baker was appointed from Mississippi on September 24, 1874. He was dismissed on November 4, 1875, for allegedly "applying a very profane and vile epithet to a cadet midshipman at the mess table.

### U.S. Naval Academy

Washington Tribune 7-17-37

The two Washington youths who have left the Naval Academy under pressure and their parents are loud in their criticism of Representative Arthur W. Mitchell who appointed the boys to the service school. Mitchell's failure to "carry through" and insist on an investigation of race prejudice and discrimination the youths had to endure at the hands of white midshipmen is blamed in a large measure for the treatment both received.

Mitchell has repeatedly made charges of discrimination against the school and in Trivers's case, the representative called a lie the statement by the commanding officer of the academy in which the latter attributed the youth's resignation to lack of fitness for naval work.

Despite this charge, and denial of another in the case of James Lee Johnson who was said to be deficient in his studies, Mitchell has done nothing except talk. His so-called threat to demand a congressional investigation in the Johnson case has failed to materialize.

Trivers's mother criticized the representative for sending boys to the academy where he should know they would suffer every indignity, and yet failing to "stand by" the boys in their greatest time of need. Rather than have their sons' spirit broken and suffer the torments of loneliness, discrimination and all of the other indirect punishment at the hands of southern white boys, the parents of both boys preferred that their sons resign.

Mitchell will render a distinct service to all parents hereafter by not sending colored boys to this hell-hole of prejudice unless he will stick by them and see that justice is done at this institution.

### INVESTIGATE NAVAL ACADEMY

New York Age 7-17-37

**NEGRO LEADERS IN ALL** parts of the country should get behind Congressman Mitchell in his demand for an investigation of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. For 40 years no Negro was able to get a nomination to become a midshipman at this government training school for naval officers. Then during the past two years Congressman Mitchell succeeded in securing the appointment of two, and neither of them were able to stay because of the jim-crow practices of the student body and officers in charge.

According to reports, George L. Trivers, the latest victim, who was sworn in on June 17, was forced to leave last week because of the insults heaped upon him. Both he and Midshipman Johnson were assigned to segregated rooms on the second deck (third floor) in a remote, unused part of Bancroft Hall. White midshipmen refused to associate with the youth and made insulting remarks when passing him in the corridors.

**During the period that Midshipman Johnson (the other Negro to gain admission) was at the institution, pebbles and sticks were tossed against his window, and bottles broken nearby after he had gone to bed at 10 p. m. The youth was able to prove that whites entered his room and disarranged it after he had cleaned it.**

Congressman Mitchell states that there are two angles to the present case. The first is to determine whether the Academy officials mistreated Trivers because of his color. The second angle involves Johnson, who was so fair in complexion he could hardly be distinguished from his white classmates.

If private educational institutions can matriculate students of the Negro and other races, without this racial friction so common at the Naval Academy, there should be no reason why there should be this difficulty a government school, except with the sanction of those heading the government. And if their actions have the approval of President Roosevelt and Secretary Swanson, the public should know about it.

We hope that Congressman Mitchell will go the limit in the expose and that sufficient pressure will be brought to bear by Negro voters to clear up this travesty on the name, "democracy."

## THE NAVY "SINKS" GEORGE TRIVER

George J. Triver, recent appointee to the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., resigned last week and is back home. He was selected by Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell of Illinois, and is the second Race youth to leave the academy grounds under perculiar circumstances within the past six months.

The Naval Academy is the aristocratic branch of the U. S. military department. It has an unwritten law that no American black man shall ever receive a diploma or military designation from its faculty. It has been put to the test since 1872 on granting the black man freedom of its classrooms, and has steadily maintained a record of ousting him without much ado.

Once the brother of Hon. J. C. Napier, former register of the U. S. Treasury, was accepted as a student and was on the eve of graduating when it was discovered that he was a member of our race. For some mysterious reason he was dismissed. Then came John Henry Conyers of South Carolina in 1872. He stayed one year and was ousted. Following him came Alonzo C. McClellan also of South Carolina in 1873. He remained a few months and was discharged without explanation.

From 1874 to 1875 Henry E. Baker of Mississippi was a student there, but to safeguard his life from mysterious attacks was forced to resign and was accommodated with a position in the U. S. patent office.

James L. Johnson, Jr., a recent appointee of Congressman Mitchell's was given his walking papers a few months ago under queer circumstances, and the only surprise in the departure of George Triver is that it was accomplished with such lightning effect. Annapolis seems to do the job better each time.

The black American who enters Annapolis Naval Academy must be a super-man and an intellectual dreadnaught. He must undergo snubs and attacks from both students and faculty; he must have the solid backing of fifteen million of his fellow-countrymen who will demand an investigation of this "closed military corporation" that they are taxed to maintain.

We cannot escape facts. The officials in control of the Naval Academy, more or less backed by the War Department itself, are determined that no black man shall invade the American Navy as an ensign from Annapolis and give military orders to white men. There are no Jim Crow battleships as there are separate units in the regular army.

The War Department will engage in courteous communications to prove the opposite; that it stands for fair play and justice in its operation of the Academy, but the fact remains that the black man has been trying diligently to qualify for naval service for the past 65 years and has met nothing but rebuffs and disappointments.

As far as we have gotten in the Navy during this period are a few non-commissioned jobs that carry the servant's label, and the privilege to wash pots and sling hash.

# Foolish to Send Any More Boys to Naval Academy at This Time, Says Trivers

### Impossible for Negro to Remain With Cards Stacked Against Him, Youth Says; Subject to Humiliation, Insults

### DESPITE PUNISHMENT AT HANDS OF WHITE YOUTHS, HAD TO SAY "YES, SIR"

### Denies Inference in Mitchell's Statement to White Press That He is Unfitted for Duty as Midshipman

*By GEORGE J. TRIVERS*

**As Told to Garland Mackey**

My connection with the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis was severed honorably of my own accord. The record will show this.

But back of this, I suffered and endured hardship almost beyond human endurance. I found the mental tests easily mastered and if I had been given the same consideration as other midshipmen I could have completed the course with very little difficulty. I have always been physically fit and passed the required examination with an excellent average June 14.

I received only 13 demerits while at the academy and was given those the first two days after my arrival. I am sure I would not have been given these marks had I been associated with other youths and permitted to live the life of the average midshipman.

I intend to make no charge against academy officials as I know any such charge would be impossible to prove. I would have no witnesses to back up my statements. That my stay at the academy would be short and unpleasant was the general consensus of all there.

**Not Instructed**

I think it is foolish to send any more colored boys to the academy at this time. Even two would have a hard enough time, but it is impossible for one to remain. The least that could have been done in my case was for some one to have coached me in the general routine of Navy life. Col. [Harry O. a military instructor in the Washington public schools] Atwood was supposed to have given me instruction in some of the many details that I would have to face.

In the light of what happened in the Johnson case [James Lee Johnson, who was dismissed from the academy last spring, for purported deficiences in English and deportment] some effort should have been put forth to have instructed me in details that I would have to face.

**Left Alone**

I had no one to talk with like other midshipmen or to instruct me as to how to arrange my effects. I knew nothing of the various technical names for certain things I had to confront.

For instance, all midshipmen were required to have windows in their rooms lowered three inches from the top. Of course, I did not know this regulation, as I did not have a room mate like other midshipmen. Shades were to be rolled "two-blocks." I received a demerit before I knew what "two-blocks" meant. The shade cord is required to be rolled around the stick of the shade twice and the end hang down.

Rooms are equipped for two with two beds. In all other cases there were two in a room and the work divided. In my case, I had to keep the entire room in regulation order as well as the two beds.

We are given a book on regulation covering 180 pages with some 4,500 articles. I had to cram this information the very first day with no one to instruct me in techincal names. Other boys had the assistance of older midshipmen to help them and were not required to read this mass of material and become familiar with the thousands of details in such a short period.

**Called Names**

I was constantly humiliated and if I tried to keep my chest out the more I was sought to be humbled. You have to answer all second-year men with "yes sir." If one said "come here, nigger" I would have to say "yes sir," or I would be reported and receive a demerit.

If I had resented the remark or followed my inclination to strike one I no doubt would have been attacked. I knew I would have gotten the worst of any physical encounter in such a prejudiced place. They could easily have attacked me and got away with it.

I liked sports and the only time I really got any enjoyment out of Navy life was when I was alone playing basketball or punching a bag in the gymnasium. Frequently on such occasions, white midshipmen would come on the floor and order me to leave and go to my room.

Of course, they did not go as far with newly arrived white midshipmen. The second-year men at one time saw me attempt to enter the park and three immediately grabbed me and ordered me to my room. There was nothing for me to do but go to my room and spend the time reading and studying.

**Humiliated at Every Turn**

Rooms are formally inspected at stated periods but may be inspected at any time. In my case inspectors put forth unusual effort to find a speck of dust about the room or some article disarranged. I was fortunate in having some cardboard which I used to dig between the cracks of window sills, closets and even the cracks of the floors so as to avoid demerits. I had to arise each morning an hour before reveille in order to go over my room.

At tmies when I became lonesome I would talk to several colored barbers at the academy, but even this was denied me when it was discovered. It's hard to contact outside people over the telephone so I even stopped calling my mother. It's easier for those on the outside to get in touch with us.

Congressman Mitchell [Representative Arthur W. Mitchell, of Illinois, who appointed Trivers to the academy] berated me for resigning before I communicated with him. But Mitchell never came to the academy before I resigned or communicated with me. He promised to secure for me a book of regulations before I entered the academy, but he never did this.

**Calls Mitchell Rude**

He called me a lie when I informed him of this fact. He was also rude to my mother and slammed up the telephone receiver while she was talking to him. I have been disappointed in our Negro representative. Since he knew of conditions at the academy he could have at least instructed me in what to expect. I was entirely green. The little military training I had in high school helped me some, but the Navy routine is quite different from anything I have ever done.

In the light of what I have been through I do not think it advisable for any Negro to enter the academy at this time. Of course it would help some if a Congressman would put forth some effort and follow through with his candidate, but when practically deserted as I was it is a hopeless task.

Mitchell put out the statement that I resigned because I found I could not do a midshipmen's work. I doubt if Mitchell or himself could do the work under the same conditions.

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# COWARDLY INSULTS AT NAVAL ACADEMY TORE SON'S NERVES, TRIVERS'S MOTHER TELLS AFRO

SEE PAGE 2 FOR MORE ON ACADEMY SCANDAL

WASHINGTON.

When George Trivers, 20, Miner Teachers' College graduate, left the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis last week, the second student to resign from that institution within a year because of midshipmen's jim crow tactics, an executive shook his hand, told him he had made excellent progress, would have made a good midshipman, and that he was certain the youth would succeed in life.

Mrs. Claudine T. Trivers, the youth's widowed mother, made that statement to the AFRO, this week, in an exclusive interview, emphatically denying assertions attributed to officials at the Academy, last week, that her son was deficient in English and other subjects, hence was forced to resign.

"That's absurd," Mrs. Trivers exclaimed. "George was an A No. 1 student in graded school, all through Dunbar High School, got a straight B average in college, and stands No. 2 on the list of eligibles for appointment to the Washington junior high schools, after examinations, with mathematics and science as his specialties."

**"Seeks to Master Tasks"**

"George has always been a peculiar boy," Mrs. Trivers continued, "in that he never liked to attempt things just to be attempting them. He's always worked at things to master them.

**"He went to the Academy to master his work, and to succeed in his studies. He never doubted for a moment that he could master the work of the Academy.**

"But he hadn't bargained on the effect of the open hatred and insults on his nerves. He told me that one day, when he had left the dining hall, and gone out into the open courtyard behind the building for recreation with the other midshipmen, a burly white boy came up to him, called him 'N—' and told him never to let him be caught in that courtyard again as long as he was at the institution.

**Couldn't Fight All**

"George told me that he saw that the other students were ready to back up his threats. He wanted to wade into them all and knock them down, but what good would that have done? He couldn't fight the whole student body?"

Mrs. Trivers said that the treatment her son received shattered his nerves. From morning till night it was the same thing, she proceeded. He had to be responsible for double the space in his room, since he was put into a room alone, while other boys, who slept two in a room, were responsible each for half the space in their quarters.

**He was kept off to himself as much as possible, she said. When he went out for infantry or target practice, he was the center in the limelight. The white boys kept as far away from his as possible when drilling. They sought to make him fumble by crowding around him, stepping on his feet, when he went into the gym to play basketball.**

"Despite these handicaps," the youth's mother asserted, "and the fact that one of the officers told him he would have to do everything better than anyone else because he was in the limelight, George did well in his work.

**Strain Takes Toll**

"Sailing and boating have always been his love," Mrs. Trivers continued. "He stood high in infantry drill, and target practice. The English that he had was a walk away for him. But the strain was just too nerve-wracking for the boy.

**"When I went down to see him on that Sunday, we walked around the grounds, but I didn't see any of the officials. He told me how he couldn't sleep, how his nerves were getting jumpy, and that he was losing his appetite, all because of this never-ending fight to crush him."**

Mrs. Trivers said that George noticed that some of the fellows at the Academy, during his first two or three days, seemed rather decent, but they soon ceased to show that side of their nature, when the rank and file began their insults.

**Approves Resignation**

"When George wrote me," she asserted, "that he had sent in his resignation, but it would not be final until I gave my assent, I wrote him a short letter, giving my consent, despite the fact that I did want him to stay and make good.

"I also reasoned that I did not want my boy to lose his health or to make any other such sacrifice for me. George would have stayed had I asked him to. He did not want to let me down and the only thing that kept him going was fear of not measuring up to my hopes."

**Didn't Consult Mitchell**

Asked whether Representative Mitchell had talked to her about her son's resignation, Mrs. Trivers said neither she nor her son had had contact with the Illinois Representative since he called her, when he read of the boy's resignation in the papers, and went to the Academy to make an investigation.

"Mr. Mitchell seemed much upset over my son's resigning," she added, "and wanted to know why he had not been consulted. I told him that George had talked the matter over with me, and that I felt that there was nothing more to be done about it but resign.

**"It just seemed to me that there was nothing to be done further, when I understood how George felt about the matter, and how his health was gradually being affected.**

"It just didn't seem to matter even though George had made promises to Mr. Mitchell, before he left for the Academy, to advise him of his activities."

**Would Teach in Fall**

In the meantime, Trivers is back at his mother's home, 2817 1-2 Elvans Road, Southeast, doing odd jobs. If he is appointed in the fall, he will teach in Washington.

Trivers has a sister, Mrs. Sylvia McKenzie, secretary to John H. Wilson, local attorney. Their mother has been a widow since 1925.

# Jim Crow Tactics Ruled Naval Academy Sixty-Four Years Ago

## Chronicle to Publish Exclusive Story of Former Cadet-Late Dr. A. C. McClennan

mourned by colored and white alike for both groups held him in high esteem as a surgeon and a man.

The recent resignation of Cadet Midshipman George Trivers from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., recalls the story of another cadet who was forced out of the same academy 64 years ago. Alonzo Clifton McClennan was appointed to the grade of Cadet Midshipman on October 30, 1873. Being rather light in complexion it took a few days for his race to be definitely known during which time he received every courtesy. But the moment it was discovered that he was a Negro, McClennan was made the target of systemized insult and persecution which never abated until he resigned from the Academy to pursue a medical career.

**Story for Chronicle**

Through relatives of the late Dr. McClennan in the persons of Mrs. Thomas, a daughter, and Miss Maude Thomas, granddaughter, both of 558 Massachusetts Avenue, the Boston CHRONICLE is in possession of the exclusive story of the Cadet's experiences at the Naval Academy. This was written by his own hand and will be given to the CHRONICLE readers without any change or deletion. The first instalment of this very interesting story will begin next week.

**Noted Surgeon**

Dr. McClennan studied surgery at Howard University, graduating with honors along with such notables as the late Dr. W. D. Crum, former minister to Liberia. The doctor's specialty was surgery and he earned a widespread reputation for his excellence as a surgeon. He practiced in Columbia, S. C. and in Augusta, Ga., but lived most of his life in Charleston, S. C.

**Founds Nurses School**

Observing the lack of competent nurses and the absence of schooling and hospital facilities for colored people, Dr. McClennan organized a Training School and Hospital for Colored Nurses of which he was the first and only surgeon-in-charge. Dr. McClennan died in 1912 and was

## ARMY & NAVY

### *In Again, Out Again*

Never yet has there been a Negro officer of the U. S. Navy and many a naval officer says privately there never will be. Oscar De Priest, three-term Republican Congressman (1929–35) from Chicago's colored district, appointed three Negroes to the Naval Academy. None got in. One was disqualified for imperfect eyesight, one because of age (limits are 16–20), one flunked the entrance exams. Negro Congressman Arthur Wergs Mitchell who defeated Mr. De Priest in 1934 had better luck. Year ago he appointed James Lee Johnson Jr., who got into the Naval Academy, lasted one semester, was then flunked out (TIME, March 1). Congressman Mitchell protested volubly for a few days. Later he turned up with two new appointees. One of these, George J. Trivers of Philadelphia, got by the physical and scholastic examinations.

Of George Trivers, 20, whose mother was for eight years a chambermaid at Washington's Wardman Park Hotel and recently got a new job as charwoman in the Old House Office Building, Congressman Mitchell had high hopes. Trivers had to work his way through high school and Miner Teachers College, where he was an R.O.T.C. officer, sold Negro newspapers. He got a job with the National Youth Administration. Congressman Mitchell thought he was tough enough to fight his own battles, might force Annapolis and the Navy to swallow their lily-white tradition. Last week Patron Mitchell had a shock. George Trivers' mother let him know that her son had resigned from the Naval Academy.

Irked by his failure to produce a sticker, the Congressman whipped out a statement: "I do not believe he is the fighting type. . . . I am only too sorry I did not discover this weakness in him before he was named a candidate. . . ." Academy officials told him Trivers had not complained to them.

George Trivers held his story until he was well away from Annapolis: Instructors had treated him all right but midshipmen warned, "Nigger, stay away from us." During drill his toes were literally stepped on. In the gymnasium he could not pick up a basketball without having it snatched away. He went without sleep because the white boys pounded on the walls until the room seemed ready to cave in. Weak or strong, George Trivers decided enough was enough.

*Wide World*

EX-MIDSHIPMAN TRIVERS

*His classmates: "Nigger, stay away from us."*

## Recall the Superintendent

As pointed out by Levi Jolley, AFRO-AMERICAN staff correspondent who covered the George I. Trivers resignation from the Naval Academy, hazing and insults are to blame.

It is inconceivable that at an institution with such rigid discipline, such cowardly and undemocratic behavior could take place without somebody in authority knowing about it.

If Captain Todd, acting superintendent at the academy, is not competent enough to apprehend the perpetrators of insulting acts against colored appointees, he should be recalled.

If, on the other hand, he knows who committed these abuses and does nothing about it, he should be booted out.

Let us have the Naval Academy scandals cleaned up.

# FIGHTING TYPE; GOOD'--MITCHELL

### Congressman Says, After Investigation, That Youth Who Resigned From Navy Is "Inclined to Move Along the Line of Least Resistance."

WASHINGTON, July 22—(ANP)—After probing the resignation of Midshipman George J. Trivers, his recent appointee to the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Rep. Arthur W. Mitchell of Illinois declared last week he had come to the conclusion that the youth "is not the type that would make good in the Navy."

"I do not believe he is of the fighting type," said the congressman. "I am impressed rather strongly that he does not wish any position that requires strenuous effort; that he is like many other young men I have known—he wishes to move along the line of least resistance.

"I am only too sorry that I did not discover this weakness in him before he was named as a candidate for the scholarship at the academy. It is my opinion he would not make good if he remained in the academy. Unlike Midshipman Johnson, an appointee of mine who resigned several months ago, Trivers does not measure up to what I regard as the standard required in military life."

Navy, Negroes in - 1937

# "Anchors Aweigh"

The challenge hurled at colored citizenship in America by the Naval Academy has reached the stage where [illegible] striking, patriotic and progressive men and women of the race can no longer refrain from meeting it.

The snooty attitude of the student body might be ignored, but only a stupid fool could fail to see now that the color bar which a young man of our group meets when he qualifies to serve this country as a naval officer is rooted deeply in the administrative groundwork of the institution.

At no institution in this country could such a situation exist if it did not have the tacit, if not the active, support of the administrative forces at the institution. There is even a question as to whether it does not have the tacit support of the high command of the fighting forces of this country.

At any rate, the recent resignation of Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell's appointee, George I. Trivers, creates a situation in which colored citizens of this country must either raise the white flag or prepare for a decisive battle to crack the color bar defenses at the tax-supported Naval Academy.

What the AFRO-AMERICAN suggests is mobilization for the most telling offensive this country has ever witnessed.

**We say, "Anchors Aweigh!"**

* * * *

FIRST OF ALL, let's get our battle front in order. The resignation of young Trivers before a conference with Congressman Mitchell was inexcusable. His resignation without putting up a stiff fight against the organized effort to boot him out shows that he was not made of the stuff to meet the challenge in this hotbed of color prejudice.

**What any young man of color who goes to the Naval Academy must understand to begin with, is that the moment he enters the place, so far as he is concerned, THE WAR IS ALREADY ON.**

**For him, it is already, "Anchors Aweigh."**

He must understand that he has not only undertaken to prepare to meet the enemy who might some day attack his fatherland, but that from the very first day he is there, he must stand ready to face the more insidious enemy within the ranks of American democracy—an enemy which fights with more cowardly and damnable poison gas than any foreign enemy can hurl.

**BUT HE MUST BE OF THE STUFF THAT CAN FIGHT.**

First of all, he must be mentally, physically and morally capable and alert. He must have courage, stamina, and the spirit of the crusader. He must have guts and determination.

He must be a soldier who can lift his chin with superior loftiness in the teeth of the cheap snobbery which the Naval Academy administration allows white midshipmen to practice against colored American citizens.

He must be a man who can swap punches, if need be, to demonstrate that he is no coward, even in the conflict with cowards.

**He must keep faith in that American democracy which was born with the birth pains of the Revolutionary War and in the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, and in the Constitution which says that NO MAN SHALL BE DEPRIVED OF THE RIGHTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP ON ACCOUNT OF RACE OR COLOR.**

He must understand that in his "Golgotha" at the Naval Academy he is fighting the fight of colored and white democracy in America, and that his CAUSE IS JUST.

He must, like a soldier, be able to face defeat and even death, if need be, in the struggle, but if he wins—and some day some young man will win—he will be a national hero; for, the first colored man who wades through four years of the hell at Annapolis and hurls his cap in a June Day exercise, will write his name so indelibly in American History that no prejudice will be able to erase it.

* * * *

AND, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP? Obviously, it is an organized and definite movement to find such young men and see that they get to the Naval Academy.

Congressman Mitchell has been meeting this issue with courage and determination. But Congressman Mitchell alone cannot be expected to shoulder the whole burden.

How are appointments to the Naval Academy made?

First of all, the President has the privilege of naming candidates. There is no reason why President Roosevelt should not be induced to give his approval to fair play and the New Deal principles by naming one colored candidate to the institution.

Every member of the U.S. Congress has the privilege of making nominations. There is no reason why colored youths should not be nominated by white members of Congress, especially in those districts where there are large colored constituencies. Congressman Mitchell has named white youths, and properly so.

There are also other sources through which candidates sift into the academy, and we must find these sources and tap them. There is no reason why we should not have thirty or forty midshipmen. With such a number they would be better able to weather the chilling blasts of snobbery and to form a fighting unit against the organized efforts to boot them out. Forty midshipmen all couldn't be wrong.

* * * *

AND WHAT IS THE DUTY of our leaders, of our 14,000,000 citizens and those whites who profess an attitude of fair play to all citizens without regard to race or color?

No longer can colored citizens fail to realize the significance and implications in this Naval Academy color bar. No one could expect fair play and democracy from white youth trained at this snobbish institution where there is an unwritten law, condoned by the Naval Academy administration, itself, to boot out by hook or crook every dark-skinned American citizen.

We must accept it as a challenge, not to the individual candidate sent there, but a challenge to 14,000,000 colored Americans. It is a challenge, not only to our status at the Naval Academy, but to our place in the whole fabric of American life.

We must organize to fight in the united front and must call to our aid every white man and woman who professes to want fair play in this country.

**Who will take up the challenge? What individuals or organizations will come forward to lead the forces?**

**The AFRO-AMERICAN shouts: "Anchors Aweigh!"**

Continued from →

he had ever seen a naval officer, unless it was when he was brought to Charleston during the war to assist in constructing the fortifications to keep the boys in blue outside the harbor or confined to Morris Island. Anyhow, he did not know how I was situated at Annapolis and I did not hesitate to let him know that he had just as well give his consent for me to leave, as I had determined to do so anyway. He wrote that he would rather his right arm be severed from his body than have me leave the academy, but if I was bound to go he would leave it with me.

I presented this letter to the Secretary of the Navy, with my resignation, and it was accepted. I left the academy with no one within its walls to regret my departure; but, oh, my God, what a weight had been taken off my head and shoulders. I felt so free that I could not hear my steps on the stone pavement as I wended my way to the steamer to take passage to Baltimore.

# ANNAPOLIS--- A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE!

# Late Ex-Midshipman McClellan Tells Why He Left Naval Academy

(EXCLUSIVE TO THE CHRONICLE)

**(This story is the property of the BOSTON CHRONICLE and must not be reprinted in whole or in part without permission from the CHRONICLE.—Editor.)**

(Continued from last week)

It was useless for me to worry over this condition. I was in the school and I had to make the best of it. I went to my recitations—and we had such long lessons. In history the professor looked at me as if he was going to give us for the first lesson everything that was in the book except the title page. With these hard, long lessons I felt that my lot was a hard one. When I was at the public schools of Columbia and in the Benedict Institute, also in Columbia, I was king bee in the classes, but I found that these conditions had changed and I now did not even stand well at the foot of the class. This annoyed me very much and it preyed on my mind. It caused a depression that cannot be described or explained.

This did not make my disposition very smooth, and when one of the cadets interfered with me I resented it at once. I made up my mind that if I could not make the marks to pass through the school I would leave some marks that might cause me to pass out and return home, not with the honors of a diploma from this great American naval school, but with the honor of having protected myself by muscular force. It about ended that way, too. Finally, it came to the time when Conyers was dropped, and I was left alone in room 64 with nothing but the bed and books and the speechless walls as companions. I was delighted when the boy came up to black my boots and to empty the trash in my room. I would keep him to talk with me, and sometimes he would tear himself away and continue with his work. I had already felt demoralized and homesick after Conyers left, but I continued to study hard and make the best marks I could. I knew the whole country was listening and watching to learn what progress was making, much more after Conyers had been dropped. The people of Columbia had home pride in my progress at the academy and this thing worried me more than anything else.

I had no father or mother to write me cheering letters to brace me up and assist in propping the human building that soon gave signs of collapse. But I received cheering letters from friends in Columbia and my preceptors, Jones and O'Hear to whom I owed so much for the tutoring they gave me. Not that they charged me money, but I owed them several thousand dollars worth of gratitude for preparing me to enter the institution and make a mark in life.

But after being in the institution for some months I could see that things were not going well with me, and with the harsh treatment I was receiving at the hands of my fellow cadets I would not be able to stand it, and concluded that the air was too close in there for me. I kept on though with my studies until the first session's troubles began. The section in French that I was assigned to was reported for being disorderly and the cadet who was in charge of the section was demerited the next day. The day after that my name was read out to my surprise for breaking ranks in the same section before the order was given to break ranks. I was very much worked up and at once sent a denial to the commandant. This made it a question of veracity between me and the cadet, and instead of being demerited, the usual course pursued, I was ordered to be court martialed. I presented myself to the court and several testified that I did break ranks before the order was given. I knew that I did not, as I was left to pass up to the fourth floor where my room was situated, after the others had dropped out on the second and third floors. I could see that it was a put-up job and declined to testify in my own behalf.

After the finding of the court was known, it was recommended that I be dismissed from the navy. I at once wrote to Congressman Cain who was then at Washington, the circumstances of the case and asked him to see Gen. Robeson, and look after the protests. He very kindly did so and the secretary refused to confirm the findings of the court and I resumed my studies. A month or two after this I got in trouble again and this time it was at the supper table. A young chap from Pennsylvania, Blodgett, by name, who sat on my left, insisted that I should move my seat further from him because the cadet on my right was absent. I told him that I did not intend to move my seat to please him and, further, if he did not stop annoying me I would strike him. He kept on, and at last patience ceased to be a virtue and I tapped him lightly. He was assisted to his seat with the aid of some fellow cadets. The captain at the head of the table ordered him to immediately report to the officer of the day and the next morning my name was read out for striking a fellow cadet at the table. I expected trouble and plenty of it and it came, for I found that no words, however offensive when directed at me, would justify striking a fellow cadet. But it was too late now. The thing was done. The next day I was ordered to be court martialed again.

All the witnesses to the unpleasantness were at the court to testify to the fact that Blodgett did not do anything at all to me and that I had struck him without any real provocation. Great guns! I thought at least one cadet would state how the thing happened and help me out to make my testimony worth something when I gave a true statement of how the cadet came to be struck by me. But I had no one to say a word in my favor and I told the court that it was hardly necessary for me to say anything, as everything just seemed to be one-sided as far as the testimony was concerned. At any rate, I rested my case there and of course was not surprised when I found that the judgment of the court was that I was guilty and was ordered to be confined on board the ship Santee for six months. I thought this was very hard, but after I got on board the ship I found out that it was not so hard after all. The ship Santee had been at the academy for several years and was not a prison ship. Her hull was over ten feet in the mud and she was used as a practice ship for great guns. The target was placed 1,100 yards down the bay and from this old ship the practice was made. The other ship, the Constellation, was used for exercises in seamanship, etc. I rather liked it on the ship, as I had the sailors to converse with and was not annoyed by the boys at the main building. I went to my recitations and meals as usual and had the pleasure of walking in the dining-room when all the other cadets were there. There was no difference in my situation, only I had to sleep on the ship every night. I did not like the idea of sleeping in a hammock but after awhile I got accustomed to it. Yet there was one thing that happened that I do not think I could have got accustomed to, even if I had remained at Annapolis until now, and that was having my hammock rope, and one end, at that, cut while I was peacefully asleep and unconscious of anything that might be going on.

One night, in the main building, some of the cadets were caught doing some ugly act, gambling or something equally bad, and they were all sent down on board the ship Santee to sleep for the night. I heard the boys come aboard and I at once felt nervous, for I knew that they all had to sleep on the same deck with me. However, I got up and refixed my hammock and made my ropes tighter, so that I could take a look at the boys and see how they were located for the night. After looking all around and thinking many things that could happen I concluded that I had just as well go to bed, but I engaged myself in fixing things around until all the fellows had got in their hammocks and I thought they were asleep. I felt a little composed in mind after I had seen them quietly, as I thought, go to sleep. But someone has said, very truly, that the devil is a busy man. At any rate it proved so that night, for I had a surprise that might be somewhat as the Indians in the far West did things, although I had no experience with the savages—only as I found them in the academy and on board the ship that night. Anyhow, I was surprised by one of the fellows who was not resting well and probably thought that as he could not sleep he might just as well try to amuse himself and have something interesting to tell the other cadets when he went up to the main building the next day.

He came to my hammock while I was dead in sleep and cut my head rope. The rope being very tight and the hammock very high, I descended to the floor with a thump on the head that prevented me from waking up and caused the mate, who was on the spar deck, to come and see what the trouble was and see, as he said, if the ship had not been run into by some vessel that had lost its course and had driven its prow into the ship and caused damage that would need immediate repair. It was I who really needed repair, instead of the ship. My head was bruised and I was still dead or unconscious when he got down to the berth deck. He picked me up and called on the sailors to get a new rope so that I might pass the night with the chances of being thrown down again. Of course all the boys were asleep when the mate came down and he had trouble in arousing any of them to learn who had committed the dastardly act. The boys were all very sleepy and he could not arouse them sufficiently to make any understand what had happened The mate knew that one of the boys had done this and spoke his mind without reserve to the boys, although they were so drowsy with sleep that they could not hear what he had said.

I made no complaint to anyone and took this as my share. If those fellows had to come down every night I would have to make a special request to Admiral Wander to allow me to go aloft and swing my hammock to the yard arm. I was delighted though when I learned that they were not to be there, so after that I slept without interruption.

Things passed along quietly until two of the professors, one of whom, I believe, died at Harvard the other day, Prof. Freeman Snow of Elmira, N.Y., and the other Prof. Frank H. Foster of Springfield, Mass., made several visits to me on board the ship and told me that while they personally would like to see me get through the school, they thought it looked very doubtful to them and offered, if I would resign, to see that I got an education. I told them that was my object in coming to the academy. My desire from a boy was to be a physician and from what I had seen I was not stuck on the navy and was not particular about being an officer if the way was made clear for me to get an education.

Finally I consented and wrote my guardian, a very dear uncle, of the offer that was made to me, and that I had consented to take it up. This did not seem to suit him, as he wanted me to graduate and become an officer in the American navy. I don't think

Navy, Negroes in – 1937

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NORFOLK. —(ANS)— A story book king once cried, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse....." and went down to an ignominous death unmounted and stripped of all his former glory.

But these words are still ringing in the ears of people that lived many years too late to accost the king on his sturdy steed and send him off to lead his legions.

Today, in the city of Norfolk is a man, not a king, and he doesn't have need for a horse, but his need is as great and his heart as royal He is [illegible] Negro sea captains, Captain D[illegible] E. Wright, and his prayer is "A ship a ship, anything for a ship. . ."

**Piloted Many Ships**

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Captain Wright is 46 years old, a dignified, bespectacled gentleman who has been at the helm of many of America's most famous yachts and river boats since he began his career as an apprentice on the "Islander" back in 1907. Captain Wright's father had a very good friend, a river man, Captain Daniel Hamilton, for whom the boy was named. Capt. Hamilton took the youngster aboard his craft for two reasons: he was fond of the father and he admired the blazing ambition of the son. And he took the boy "to learn the trade o' pilotin' " on one of his trips from Charleston to Savannah and Jacksonville.

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The post-war period brought sudden prosperity and many were the persons who were buying big boats. There was a dearth of men available to command these vessels and Capt. Floyd deserted the rivers for the open sea where he piloted the world's most palatial yachts until his maritime career was nipped in the bud in 1935.

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The sea captain, yearning to get back on his course and ply the chartered waterways, is an Elk, Mason, and Pythian. He is also a graduate of Tuskegee institute the one organization that would help him most, however, is the Master, Mates, and Pilots Association, a CIO affiliate, which bars him on account of his color.

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They also must be unmarried, be not less than 64 inches high and of proportionate weight to age and height; pass a rigid physical examination and have no juvenile police reform school or prison record, except for minor infractions not involving moral turpitude.

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Mr. Thompson will begin with a new class of 100 on the first of the month. He has been in the service for 18 years.

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Journal and Guide

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cember, 1880, the station was made an all-Negro station, wherein were concentrated all the Negroes then remaining in the Life-Saving Service. The first Negro keeper of the station was Capt. Dick Etheridge who was succeeded, respectively, by Meekins, John C. Berry, William C. Bowser, Horace Case, and Sylvester L. Mackey.

Captain Pruden now resides at 504 Peartree Road, this city. He left the station only 30 days when, on December 31, 1880, it was destroyed in a fire of incendiary origin. A reward of $3,000 for the apprehension of the guilty party or parties is still standing.

Benjamin J. Bowser, last June and is now in charge of the station with his children might have education-al advantages not available for the eight Negro surfmen who constitute the station crew. These men are: Maxie M. Berry, Lonnie G. Gray, John Mackey, John C. Berry, William Meekins, Norfleet P. Palmer, Horace Case, and Syl-

OTHERS IN CHARGE

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The agreement followed a special meeting on Friday when the matter of placing white and colored men together was taken up as as the major business.

**May Affect All Boats**

The arrangement may bring about one of the most far-reaching changes in employment on coastwise vessels. In time it may affect the employment on all ocean-going vessels, and open to colored seamen many jobs which heretofore they could not get.

**W. W. Murphy, steward's agent for the National Maritime Union, told the AFRO this week that an effort would be made to sign mixed crews on all the boats. There would also be an effort made, he said, to equalize the number of colored employees.**

For the first time in maritime history, he said, a tanker, the Ruth Kellog, steamed off last week manned entirely with a colored crew. The crew of the Steamship McKinley has also been filled with colored men in the equalization process.

**Must Give Reasons**

The agreement signed Friday reads: "The union agrees to furnish qualified and competent employees upon the demand of the company, subject to the approval of the company. In the event the company rejects an employee furnished by the union, the company shall state to the union in writing the specific reason or reasons for such rejection."

**Men Were Denied Jobs**

The action last week is the outcome of a fight several months ago when colored stewards and seamen were refused assignment to boats.

Under the National Maritime Union policy it will be unlawful to discriminate against any worker because of color and white crew managers must make assignments to boats without regard to color.

# Inside Story Given of Coast Guard Unit Change of Commander

(Editor's Note—The following article is published as submitted to the Guide by a white contributor, who prefers that his name not be used. Because of the nature of the event, this viewpoint of a white citizen of standing gives the article added significance and interest.)

ELIZABETH CITY, N. C.—A Negro who for years has held the respect of the white race last week lost some of his respect for that race. And thereby hangs a tale.

That Negro is George Edward Pruden, who was retired November 1 as an officer in the United States Coast Guard Service after 23 years of meritorious service.

"I have been muzzled for a long time, but I feel that I can now say some things which have rankled within my chest for years," said Boatswain's Mate (First Class) Pruden.

Altho his sense of decency and an innate feeling of respect for the white race and his superior officers prompted him to try and conceal it, George Pruden unconsciously displayed, as he talked, some of the bitterness he feels.

**RAILROADED, IS BELIEF**

"I don't know of a single instance in which an officer of my age, my service record, and my physical condition has been involuntarily retired by the Coast Guard Service," he said. Tho he did not say so in so many words, one could detect that Pruden feels he was "railroaded" out of the service.

"I have been a victim not only of prejudice, but of envy as well," the retired Coast Guardsman said. "I was retired this week because of my so-called 'disability,' yet I know Coast Guard officers who are still in active service who are far inferior, physically, to me.

"My retirement capped a series of slights. Several months ago all that I had striven for over a period of twenty-three years was wiped out overnight when a white officer who wanted to get back to his native county was brought down from the North and placed in command of Pea Island Station, as my superior.

**DEMOTED IN 1933**

"In 1933, when the Coast Guard Service underwent a general shakedown, I was the only officer in the Seventh District who was demoted in rank, altho there was no basis in my service record to justify a demotion. It just happened that no wrecks had piled up in front of my station so I didn't have the array of medals some of the other officers had."

George E. Pruden, a native of Manteo, N. C., went to Pea Island Coast Guard Station in 1911 as a cook and on August 8, 1912, he was appointed as a substitute surfman. On March 26, 1914, he was named to fill out the unexpired enlistment of Matthew Jarvis, a Negro surfman who had frozen to death a month previous, and he remained in the service at Pea Island from that date until his retirement.

**PROMOTED STEADILY**

When Pruden entered the service as a surfman, Boastswain Lewis S. Wescott was the captain or commanding officer of Pea Island, which was the only Coast Guard Station in the country with an all-Negro crew. Pruden was elevated to the rank of Boatswain's Mate in December, 1920, and on June 22, 1922, he was placed in command of the station.

In December, 1924, upon recommendation of Commander James A. Price, now retired, and after he had passed the examination with flying colors, Pruden was promoted to the rank of Chief Boatswain's Mate. He held this rank until his unexplained demotion of 1933.

In 1925, he stood the examination for the position of Boatswain and came out third in competition with a group of the finest officers in the district. All in all, George Pruden stood eleven civil service examinations, and on all of them he made very high grades.

**RECORD LAUDED**

Pruden's service record is unimpeachable. Brave, courteous and intelligent, he commanded the respect of members of the white race with whom he came in contact. He frequently worked side by side with white Coast Guardsmen, with never the slightest bit of friction appearing. At times he was in charge of white men, but he always so conducted himself as to merit their respect. He and his crew kept well within their bounds. And, incidentally, 97 percent of the assistance rendered by the Pea Island crew was service rendered to white persons.

A check-up made a few years back revealed the interesting fact that over a period of 47 years a total of 609 lives had been at risk in work handled by the Pea Island crew. And during the fifteen years Pruden was in charge of the station not a life was lost.

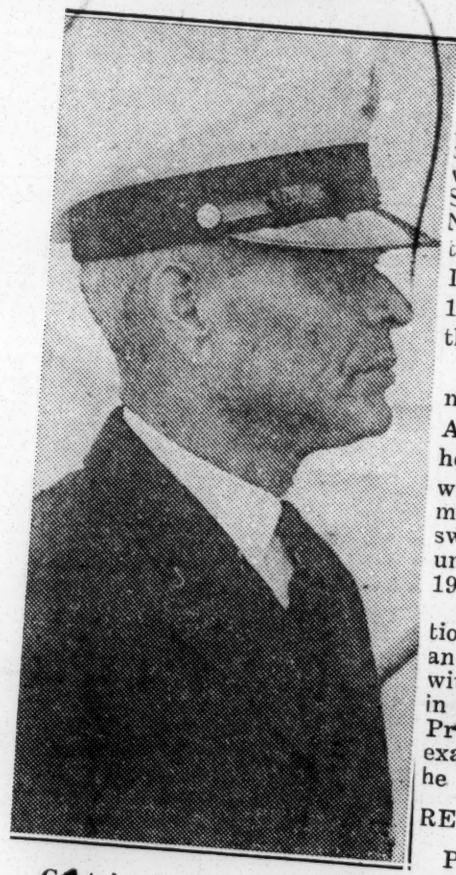
**NOTABLE RECORD**

On March 11, 1923, Pruden and some of his crew performed an extremely hazardous and difficult rescue of four white Coast Guardsmen.

Two major rescues that he remembers well were those of the Dorothy L. Brinkman in 1925 and the Margaret Spencer in 1926. Both were four-masted schooners with nine in their crews. All lives were saved.

"The trouble at Pea Island Station was never internal; it always was external," said Mr. Pruden this week. "There was someone

**RETIRED**



Captain George E. Pruden, who was retired Monday from the United States Coast Guard after 23 years of meritorious service at the Pea Island Coast Guard Station on the North Carolina seacoast. During the last 15 years of his service he was officer-in-charge of the station.

Last June, for the first time, a white officer-in-charge was placed at the station. For over fifty years the station had been entirely manned by colored men, the only one so manned in the entire country.

**From reliable sources, subsequent to inquiries initiated by the Journal and Guide, it was learned that the racial change in command was "temporary" and did not foreshadow a permanent change in official policy with regards to the station.**

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The agreement followed a special meeting on Friday when the matter of placing white and colored men together was taken up as as the major business.

**May Affect All Boats**

The arrangement may bring about one of the most far-reaching changes in employment on coastwise vessels. In time it may affect the employment on all ocean-going vessels, and open to colored seamen many jobs which heretofore they could not get.

**W. W. Murphy, steward's agent for the National Maritime Union, told the AFRO this week that an effort would be made to sign mixed crews on all the boats. There would also be an effort made, he said, to equalize the number of colored employees.**

For the first time in maritime history, he said, a tanker, the Ruth Kellog, steamed off last week manned entirely with a colored crew. The Steamship McKinley has also been filled with colored men in the equalization process.

**Must Give Reasons**

The agreement signed Friday reads: "The union agrees to furnish qualified and competent employees upon the demand of the company, subject to the approval of the company. In the event the company rejects an employee furnished by the union, the company shall state to the union in writing the specific reason or reasons for such rejection."

**Men Were Denied Jobs**

The action last week is the outcome of a fight several months ago when colored stewards and seamen were refused assignment

# Inside Story Given of Coast Guard Unit Change of Commander

(Editor's Note—The following article is published as submitted to the Guide by a white contributor, who preiers that his name not be used. Because of the nature of the event, this viewpoint of a white citizen of standing gives the article added significance and interest.)

ELIZABETH CITY, N. C.—A Negro who for years has held the respect of the white race lost some of his respect for that race. And thereby hangs a tale.

That Negro is George Edward Pruden, who was retired November 1 as an officer in the United States Coast Guard Service after 23 years of meritorious service.

"I have been muzzled for a long time, but I feel that I can now say some things which have rankled within my chest for years," said Boatswain's Mate (First Class) George Pruden.

Altho his sense of decency and an innate feeling of respect for the white race and his superior officers prompted him to try and conceal it, George Pruden unconsciously displayed, as he talked, some of the bitterness he feels.

"I don't know of a single instance in which an officer of my age, my service record, and my physical condition has been involuntarily retired by the Coast Guard Service," he said. Tho he did not say so in so many words, one could detect that Pruden feels he was "railroaded" out of the service.

"I have been a victim not only of prejudice, but of envy as well," the retired Coast Guardsman said. "I did not foreshadow a permanent change in official policy with regards to the station. Pruden was in charge of the station not a life was lost.

## NOTABLE RECORD

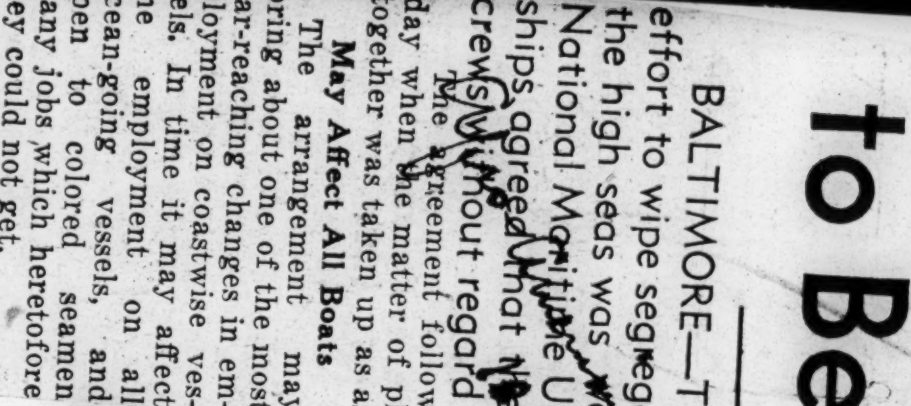
On March 11, 1923, Pruden and some of his crew performed an extremely hazardous and difficult rescue of four white Coast Guardsmen.

Two major rescues that he remembers well were those of the Dorothy L. Brinkman in 1925 and the Margaret Spencer in 1926. Both were four-masted schooners with nine in their crews. All lives were saved.

"The trouble at Pea Island Station was never internal; it always was external," said Mr. Pruden this week.

"There was someone higher up who was prejudiced against me and my crew and was also envious. It was the usual story of the minority group suffering. I was the only man at Pea Island with a rating, and someone reasoned that with me out of the way it would be a simple matter to get rid of the remaining Negro surfmen at the station.

"I am sorry this is happening, from me last June. It has been



## RETIRED

— RAILROADED, IS BELIEF

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Captain George E. Pruden, who was retired Monday from the United States Coast Guard after 23 years of meritorious service at the Pea Island Coast Guard Station on the North Carolina seacoast. During the last 15 years of his service he was in charge of the station.

Last June, for the first time, a white officer-in-charge was placed at the station. For fifty years the station had been entirely manned by colored men, the only one so manned in the entire country.

From reliable sources, subsequent to inquiries initiated by the Journal and Guide, it was learned that the racial change in command was "temporary" and work handled by the Pea Island crew. And during the fifteen years Pruden was in charge of the station not a life was lost.

A check-up made a few years back revealed the interesting fact that over a period of 47 years a total of 609 lives had been at risk in the North and placed in command Manteo, N. C., went to Pea Island Coast Guard Station in 1911 as a cook and on August 8, 1912, he was appointed as a substitute surfman. On March 26, 1914, he was named officers had."

George E. Pruden, a native of Manteo, N. C., went to Pea Island Coast Guard Station in 1911 as a cook and on August 8, 1912, he was appointed as a substitute surfman. On March 26, 1914, he was named to fill out the unexpired enlistment of Matthew Jarvis, a Negro surfman who had frozen to death a

month previous, and he remained in the service at Pea Island from that date until his retirement.

**PROMOTED STEADILY**

When Pruden entered the service as a surfman, Boatswain Lewis S. Wescott was the captain or commanding officer of Pea Island, which was the only Coast Guard Station in the country with an all-Negro crew. Pruden was elevated to the rank of Boatswain's Mate in December, 1920, and on June 22, 1922, he was placed in command of the station.

In December, 1924, upon recommendation of Commander James A. Price, now retired, and after he had passed the examination with flying colors, Pruden was promoted to the rank of Chief Boatswain's Mate. He held this rank until his unexplained demotion of 1933.

In 1925, he stood the examination for the position of Boatswain and came out third in competition with a group of the finest officers in the district. All in all, George Pruden stood eleven civil service examinations, and on all of them he made very high grades.

**RECORD LAUDED**

Pruden's service record is unimpeachable. Brave, courteous and intelligent, he commanded the respect of members of the white race with whom he came in contact. He frequently worked side by side with white Coast Guardsmen, with never the slightest bit of friction appearing. At times he was in charge of white men, but he always conducted himself as to merit respect. He and his crew kept well within their bounds. And, incidentally, 97 percent of the assistance rendered by the Pea Island crew was service rendered to white persons.

A check-up made a few years back revealed the interesting fact that over a period of 47 years a total of 609 lives had been at risk in the North and placed in command of the eight members of my race still at Pea Island. They will be weeded out for one reason or another without any warning, and most of them are men with families, while none of them have any money saved up for a rainy day. I saw the handwriting on the wall when a white officer came to the station and took over the command

Pea Island Station, located in North Carolina a few miles south of Oregon Inlet, was established in 1878. Its first crew was a "checkerboard crew," that is, a mixed crew of whites and Negroes, with a white officer in charge. In De-

It is a shame that they should be slid out of the service because of their race or because some white persons want their places."

**CALLS IT UNJUST**

"This is not just. The men at Pea Island have always been as loyal as anyone could be. They have been tested in every way and have proved themselves reliable

Navy; Negroes in — 1937

# A Ship, A Ship, Anything For a Ship, Cries Captain

## Daniel E. Wright Has Piloted 300 River Boats, Yachts

By A. M. WENDELL MALLIET.

Sea captains are rare among Negroes in the United States and if Daniel E. Wright is not the only one he is one of a very small number.

Starting out as an apprentice on the river boat "Islander," in 1907, when he was sixteen years old, Captain Wright has piloted more than 300 yachts since 1914, as a first class pilot on inland waters.

Because Daniel Hamilton, an old-time pilot on the "Islander," sailing from Charleston to Savannah and Jacksonville, was a good and interested friend of young Wright's father, Daniel was apprenticed by the "Islander" to "learn the trade of pilotin'." The young man remained on the boat for seven years and got his license as a first pilot to operate in inland waters.

**Piloted Government Transport.**

From 1914 to 1921 Captain Wright worked on the "Islander" as master and pilot. During the war he and his boat served as a government transport, carrying army supplies from Charleston to Parris Island.

In 1921, owing to the great demand and the lucrative wages offered by the owners of palatial yachts on the New York to Florida run, Captain Wright gave up steamboat for yacht piloting, and in the fourteen years from 1921 up to 1935 (when he joined the army of the nation's unemployed) he served as pilot on some of America's most well-known yachts.

Captain Wright was the pilot on the "Sequior" when Mrs. Herbert Hoover, then the nation's First Lady travelled with a party of friends to Florida. When President and Mrs Warren G. Harding used Senator Freelinghuysen's yacht "Victoria," it was Captain Wright who was at the wheel.

**Worked for Commerce Dept.**

His work as pilot on the U. S. motor vessel "Kilkenny," operated by the navigation service of the Department of Commerce, brought unsolicited commendation from A. Lincoln Dryden, senior navigation officer.

Writing under date of February 8, 1925, Officer Dryden said:

"Though you have not requested it, I am nevertheless handing you this for two reasons:

"1. To let you know of my appreciation of the skill and ability which you so amazingly showed in taking this vessel, at night, from Charleston to Savannah and on through to this Port (Jacksonville), rung up, all the way.

"2. That this letter may be shown to anyone needing a first class pilot, wherever you are willing to attempt, in order that they may have the advantage of splendid services.

"I trust that you may feel free at any time to use this vessel as a reference, in case the same may be necessary.

"It has been a pleasure to have you on board."

In addition to the yachts already mentioned, Captain Wright has piloted the following among many others: The "Nirode," owned by Samuel Untermyer; the "Trillora" of S. R. Guggenheim; "Eleanor IV" of Dr Hamilton Rice; the "Onika," owned by Edsel Ford; the "Firefly" of J. P. Lippincott, and the "Ottilie" of R. L. Farnham.

Born in Charleston, S. C., forty-six years ago, Captain Wright was educated in the public schools of his native city and Tuskegee Institute. He is a Mason, an Elk and a Pythian.

Now employed and desirous of going back to the inland waters of America, Captain Wright's chances for obtaining a job are not as bright as they used to be, one of the chief reasons being that because of his color he is not eligible for membership in the mighty Masters, Mates, and Pilots' Association of New York. But the call of the sea is strong and he hopes to be at the helm again.

Captain Wright and the "Sequoia" He Once Piloted.

Monticello, Fla., News
July 9, 1937

## NAVY CONDUCTS EXAMINATIONS FOR RECRUITS DAILY

**Announcement has been made by Robert Dulk, C. P. O. in charge of the Navy Recruiting Station, Valdosta, Ga., that the quota assigned this district for the month of June has been filled and examinations of nent to fill future quotas are being conducted daily. All young men between the ages of 17-25 of United States citizenship and unmarried are eligible to take this examination.**

**It is anticipates that there will be a considerable increase in future quotas assigned this district, thereby increasing chances for an early enlistment for those who qualify Young men interested in enlisting or learning what the U. S. Navy has to offer them, are invited to call or write the above station.**

**Colored boys between the ages of 18-25 inclusive, are also being accepted for enlistment in the rating of Mess Attendants with chances of advancement to Officer's Cooks and Stewards.**

# To the Navy?

JAMES I. MINOR
He took exams last month. A junior, on scholastic probation at Howard, he'll know his fate soon.

GEORGE J. TRIVERS
Miner College senior. His record was accepted for entrance to Annapolis, without examination.

Successful applicants will go to Annapolis for their physical examination during the month of June. Navigation Department officials say it will take from three to four weeks to examine all the successful contestants from the academic exams.

# COAST GUARD COMMAND IS FEARED LOST

WASHINGTON

The Government is considering building an air station at Elizabeth City, N. C., lending credence to reports that the nearby Pea Island Coast Guard station may continue under the command of a white officer.

In some quarters this move is held to indicate the possibility that Coast Guard aviation officers would not look kindly upon a colored officer and perhaps a colored crew.

**Colored for Many Years**

The Pea Island station commander, Capt. George E. Pruden, retired some months ago, and was replaced by a white officer. The station staff was all colored throughout the years beginning in 1879.

Following a storm in which more than a score of the members of an Italian ship crew died, the white officer and a number of Pea Island's white crew members were dishonorably discharged or were transferred.

Richard Etheridge was promoted to officer in charge and colored men were brought in from other stations to complete the crew.

# Nation Endangered

The circumstances leading up to the voluntary retirement of the last Negro appointed to the U. S. naval academy give sincere Americans cause to be troubled about their country. Mental and physical difficulties did not eliminate him. He had not the fortitude to endure the treatment given him by other midshipmen.

The naval academy is a public institution, both in the way it is maintained and the purpose it serves. The very men who tortured Midshipman Trivers take the oath to uphold the Constitution. They make that promise though they have already exhibited a mental reservation not to treat Negroes like other citizens.

If getting rid of the Negro midshipman meant personal gain to the hazers, there would be at least a practical reason for his mistreatment. But there is none. He, like them all, was appointed for the good of his country, not to please other appointees. His sole deviation from the common standard was that he was a Negro, a member of a race that won honor under Perry on Lake Erie and with Dewey at Manila bay.

War is lifting its ominous head to the east and to the west. When it comes the whole nation will be involved. Yet these young men, being educated at public expense for the express purpose of defending this country, do that which weakens national unity. A deliberate traitor could do no worse. Any lover of his country must be troubled about what this situation in the naval academy portends.

The silver lining on this otherwise dark cloud is that the offending midshipmen are not typical of American youth. Here in Missouri, no melting pot of races by any means, a suit has been filed to compel the white state university to admit a Negro to its law school, on the ground that while equal education for all is required by law, no law education is available for a Negro in the state. Though decision is yet to be rendered, young white men and women in Missouri university are discussing the situation this Negro plaintiff will find at the university when he wins his suit, and they are planning already to see to it that he is treated like a human being.

To some the continued existence of evil proves that the world is all wrong. To others the swing toward better human relations is the real index of what is going on.

Macon Ga., Telegraph
December 3, 1937

## *Number of Negro Sailors Increases*

An increase in the number of Negro boys enlisted in the U. S. navy was announced yesterday by Lieut. L. M. Wise, officer in charge of the recruiting station here.

Lieutenant Wise said Negroes are enlisted with the rating of mess attendant with the opportunity for advancement to officers' cooks and stewards. Unmarried Negro boys between the ages of 18 and 26 are accepted, Lieutenant Wise said.